

BOOK REVIEW

DOUGLAS CRASE. 2004. **Both: A Portrait in Two Parts**. (ISBN 0-375-42266-8, hbk.) Pantheon Books, New York. (Orders: <http://www.randomhouse.com/pantheon/catalog/>). \$25.00, 303 pp., 6 drawings, 34 photographs, 6" × 8".

Imagine two urbane, erudite, amusing (in several languages) characters. Make one an English aristocrat and the other heir to an American railroad fortune. Give them a group of friends who are the brightest members of the avant-garde on both side of the Atlantic Ocean. Add cameo parts for such luminaries as Juan Miro and Cary Grant. It sounds like the makings of a piece by Noel Coward or Evelyn Waugh.

What we have is a charming biography, *Both: A Portrait in Two Parts* by Douglas Crase. It is the story of the intertwined lives of the eminent botanist, Rupert Charles Barneby, and the horticulturalist-artist, Harry Dwight Dillon Ripley. They met as students at Harrow, drawn together by a mutual love of Latin and a mania for collecting plants. The relationship persisted through University and beyond, resulting in the disinheritance of Barneby by his father. Ripley was an orphan. The two men remained together for 48 years.

The author says that Ripley "was the enabling influence of Barneby's early direction as a botanist through his money, his affection, and the magnificent garden at his estate in Sussex." This place contained three greenhouses, every kind of special habitat, a herbaceous border, and a private herbarium. On the other side, Barneby with his inbred noblesse, was a buffer for the shy Ripley, who suffered from uncontrolled blushing, leading from embarrassment to panic.

After several visits to the United States, the couple moved to New York in 1939. Botany and horticulture continued to be at the center of their lives, but Ripley, the artist, also financed the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, a non-commercial enterprise, which became one of the most influential galleries in New York, when after the Second World War New York was the acknowledged leader in the arts. Ripley and Barneby were patrons and full participants in this exciting world of literature, music, and painting.

All of this is affectionately and gracefully recounted by Mr. Crase, a former MacArthur Fellow. He is not a botanist, but he was a friend of Barneby's and writes knowingly of his hard work and persistence. Although Ripley was regarded as something of a dilettante, he too left an impressive legacy. However, it is the relationship which is subject of this delightful book.—*Ruth Ginsburg, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, TX, 76102-4060, U.S.A.*